

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 19466

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP (MANN, JAMES R)
SUBJ: CONG EVANS' MEETING WITH PM KRIANGSAK

SUMMARY: CONGRESSMAN EVANS MET FOR NEARLY TWO HOURS WITH GEN KRIANGSAK ON JULY 7, HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY CHARGE, NELLIS, LAWRENCE, LOWMAN AND POPE. THEIR CONVERSATION, WHICH FOCUSES PRIMARILY ON NARCOTICS AND REFUGEES AND TO A LESSER EXTENT ON SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS WAS CORDIAL AND CANDID.

PM RAISED QUESTION OF MORE HELICOPTERS TO SUPPORT THAILAND'S NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION EFFORT; HE WAS UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT ANY EARLY LARGE SCALE RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES IN THAILAND BUT INDICATED HE MIGHT CONSIDER A VERY SMALL PILOT PROJECT PLAN; HE ONCE AGAIN URGED GREATER SYMPATHY FOR THAILAND'S DEFENSE NEEDS. CONGRESSMAN EVANS WAS SYMPATHETIC WITH THAILAND'S SITUATION WITH REGARD TO REFUGEES AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE EXCELLENT COOPERATION WE HAVE RECEIVED DEALING WITH THE COMPLICATED AND INTRACTABLE REFUGEE AND NARCOTICS PROBLEMS. HE URGED GREATER EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE UTILIZATION OF THE PRESENT FLEET OF HELICOPTERS. THIS CABLE REPORTS THE NARCOTICS AND SECURITY ASSISTANCE PORTIONS OF THE CONVERSATION. REFUGEES WILL BE REPORTED SEPTEL. END SUMMARY

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1. CONGRESSMAN EVANS OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY EXPRESSING HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE HIGH DEGREE OF COOPERATION THAT THE USG HAS RECEIVED FROM THAILAND IN NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION FIELD AND PRESENTED A PERSONAL LETTER FROM CONGRESSMAN WOLFF TO THE PM. AFTER THE PM AND CONGRESSMAN EVANS REFERRED TO THE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL LONGSTANDING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE US, CONGRESSMAN EVANS INDICATED THAT THE PRIMARY

PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT WAS TO STUDY THE NARCOTICS SITUATION AND ALSO, AS A MEMBER OF THE IMMIGRATION SUB COMMITTEE, TO LOOK INTO THE REFUGEE MATTERS. HE SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAILAND'S UNIQUE POSITION AS A HAVEN FOR OVER 100,000 REFUGEES AND SAID PRES CARTER'S COMMITMENT TO HELP PEOPLE IN DISTRESS WORLDWIDE WOULD SEEM TO HAVE PARTICULAR RELEVANCE TO THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN THAILAND. HE SAID THAT THE US WANTS TO ADOPT AN AGGRESSIVE POLICY TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM AND WILL URGE FRANCE, AUSTRALIA AND OTHER NATIONS TO CONTINUE TO SHARE THE REFUGEE BURDEN.

2. NARCOTICS

TURNING THE CONVERSATION TO NARCOTICS, PM SAID RTG SUPPRESSION EFFORTS HAVE BEEN INTENSIFIED. FURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO BURMA HE HAD DISCUSSED NARCOTICS AND LOOKED FORWARD TO INCREASED COOPERATION WITH THE BURMESE IN THE FUTURE. HE SAID THE EXPULSION OF CHANG CHI FU IS INDICATIVE OF THAI EFFORTS TO FORCE THE BURMESE IN THAILAND BACK TO BURMA. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT CHANG CHI FU IS STILL LOCATED CLOSE TO THE BORDER AND, ALTHOUGH HE AND HIS SUPPORTERS HAVE MOVED OUT OF THILAND, THEY STILL ENGAGE IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. KRIANGSAK FELD THE BURMESE GOVT HAD DONE A GOOD JOB BUT NOTED THAT THEY NEED HELP IN CONTROLLING THE BORDER AREAS. THAILAND, FOR ITS PART, WAS ALSO ATTEMPTING TO INTERDICT OTHER SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS TIMBER AND CHEMICALS THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE BURMESE MINORITIES. HE WOULD USE ALL THE

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POWER AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO HIM, HE SAID, TO SOOVE THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM.

3. HE NOTED THAT THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING PATTERNS HAD MOVED WESTWARD AND THAT OPIUM WAS NOW MOVING DOWN THROUGH BURMA INTO SOUTHER THAILAND AND MALAYSIA AND DAID THAT HIS GOVT HAD ALRADY BEAN TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH THE MALAYSIAN GOVT ON THIS SITUATION. HE URGED THE US TO MOVE FASTER IN SUPPORT OF THE CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAMS. WE HAVE FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON ENFORCEMENT IN THE PAST BUT NOW MORE REOURCES WERE NEEDED IN CROP SUBSTITUTION AND DEVELOPMING MARKETS FOR PRODUCTS OF CROP SUBSTITUION SCHEMES. THE M SAID THERE HAD BEEN A NEW DEVELOPMENT WITH REGARD TO THE OLK KMT FORCES IN THAILAND. WHEREAS THE KMT USED TO BE INVOLVED IN TRAFFICKING, THE KMT IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS HAD HELPED RTG SEIZE SOME 41 KILOS OF HEROIN.

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4. AS EVIDENCE OF HIS PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO COMBAT THE NARCOTICS TRADE, KRIANGSAK AID HE WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP A SPECIAL POLICE MISSION TO BE USED ONLY IN NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION AS THE BORDER PATROL POLICE HAVE OTHER MISSIONS AND CANNOT DEVOTE THEIR FULL RESOURCES TO NARCOTICS. IT IS UNCERTAIN HOW MUCH BUDGET COULD BE SPENT TO DEVELOP SUCH A SPECIAL FORCE, HOWEVER, INCREASED MOBILITY WOULD BE NEEDED FOR WHICH MORE HELICOPTERS ARE REQUIRED. PRESENTLY, BECAUSE OF MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR PROBLEMS ONLY THREE OR FOUR HELICOPTERS ARE AVAILABLE AT ANY ONE TIME. HE RAISED THE QUESTION OF MORE HELICOPTER FOR NARCOTICS WORK. "WE COOPERATE CLOSELY WITH YOU AND WELCOME YOUR PEOPLE HERE," HE SAID. "THE BURMESE WON'T PERMIT YOU TO WORK THERE, YET YOU GIVE THEM 16 HELICOPTERS." "WHY DO YOU DO THAT," HE ASKED, SMILING BUT SERIOUS.

5. CONGRESSMAN EVANS REPLIED THAT THE US WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH THE SUCCESS OF SUPPRESSION EFFORTS IN THAILAND. THE US IS COMMITTED TO CONTINUE ITS COOPERATION TO HELP IN THIS FIELD. HE SAID WE ARE INTERESTED NOT ONLY IN THAT ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM WHICH AFFECTS THE US, BUT ALSO IN CROP SUBSTITUTION AND REHABILITATION OF THAI ADDICTS. IMPROVEMENT IN THESE AREAS WOULD BE TO THE MUTUAL ADVANTAGE OF BOTH THE US AND THAILAND. HE PROMISED THAT THE PM'S RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD BE CONSIDERED BUT HE THOUGHT THE MOST IMMEDIATE
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PROBLEM APPEARED TO BE BETTER UTILIZATION OF THOSE HELICOPTERS WHICH THE RTG ALREADY HAD. IF WE COULD GET THOSE FLYING, HE SAID, WE COULD STUDY THE NEED FOR MORE.

6. THE PM REPLIED, "DON'T STUDY TOO LONG." WEEKS, NOT YEARS, SHOULD BE ADEQUATE TO MAKE DECISION ON CROP SUBSTITUTION AND OTHER

PROGRAMS WHICH HAVE BEEN UNDER STUDY FOR YEARS ALREADY. HE URGED THE CONGRESSMAN NOT TO PUT SO MUCH EMPHASIS ON ADVISORS AND PLANNING. HE SAID WHAT THAILAND NEEDS IS MORE RESOURCES IN THE FIELD, "MORE ACTION ON THE GROUND."

7. SECURITY ASSISTANCE

IN RESPONSE TO CONGRESSMAN EVANS INQUIRY ABOUT RELATIONS WITH LAOS AND CAMBODIA, THE PM SAID HE WAS CONCERNED OVER THE ESCALATION ALONG THE VIETNAM/CAMBODIAN BORDER. HE NOTED THAT IENG SARY WOULD BE VISITING THAILAND SOON AND SAID THAT HE WOULD TALK "STRAIGHT" WITH HIM ABOUT THE THAI/CAMBODIAN BORDER SITUATION. IF THE CAMBODIANS WANT PEACE, THEY MUST STOP THE BORDER INTRUSIONS. HOWEVER, KRIANGSAK SAID HE WOULD CONTINUE TO ATTEMPT TO ALLEVIATE THE SITUATION THROUGH DIALOGUE UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT INTERNAL POLITICAL PRESSURES MIGHT PUSH HIM TO TAKE MORE DRASTIC ACTION. HE USED THIS AS A DEPARTURE POINT FOR DISCUSSING THAILAND'S DEFENSE NEEDS. KRIANGSAK SAID THE THAI ARMED FORCES MUST HAVE ADEQUATE EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS TO DEVELOP THEIR DEFENSE FORCES AND TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND MORALE. WHILE ADMITTING THAT THE PRESENT CONFLICT BETWEEN CHINA AND VIETNAM REDUCES THE THREAT VIETNAM POSES TO THAILAND, THE PM ASSERTED THAT VIETNAM HAS "UNLIMITED HELP" FROM THE SOV UNION WHICH STANDS IN CONTRAST TO WHAT THAILAND AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN SEA GET FROM THE WEST. HE ALLUDED TO THE SMALL AMOUNT OF FMS CREDITS OFFERED THAILAND IN RELATION TO WHAT IT COULD BUY THESE DAYS AND NOTED THAT THAILAND NOW HAD TO GO TO THIRD COUNTRIES FOR MILITARY PURCHASES. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE US CLAIMS IN-

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INTEREST IN SEA, OUR ACTIONS DO NOT CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE OUR STATED INTEREST AND INTENT. THE US SEEMS MORE PREOCCUPIED WITH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST, TO THE EXCLUSION OF SEA.

THE CHARGE POINTED TO VP'S TRIP AND HIGH LEVEL US INTEREST IN ASEAN DIALOGUE AS RECENT INDICATORS OF OUR INVOLVEMENT IN SEA. THE PM RESPONDED, LAUGHINGLY, "'YOU TAKE ME TOO SERIOUSLY" WITH REGARD TO HIS COMMENTS ON LACK OF US INTEREST. CONTINUING MORE SERIOUSLY, THE PM SAID THAILAND HAS 44 MILLION PEOPLE, ENOUGH TO DEFEND ITSELF, FOREIGN TROOPS ARE NOT NEEDED BUT NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS ARE REQUIRED TO ASSURE ASEAN AND OTHER COUNTRIES THAT THAILAND IS CAPABLE OF DEFENDING ITSELF AND OF PROVING THE DOMINO THEORY "IMPRACTICAL." IN REPLY CONGRESSMAN EVANS ASSURED THE PM THAT THE US IS A FRIEND OF THAILAND, WANTS TO REMAIN SO AND WANTS TO HELP THAILAND MAINTAIN THE FLEXIBILITY IT NEEDS. HE FELT OUR RELATIONSHIP WOULD ALLOW US TO REACH AGREEMENT ON HOW TO ADDRESS MUTUAL NEEDS TO OUR MUTUAL BENEFIT AND PROMISED TO CONVEY PERSONALLY TO PRESIDENT CARTER THE PRIME MINISTER'S CONCERNS.

8. COMMENT: THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE MEETING WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL

AND KRIANGSAK CLEARLY ENJOYED HIS DIALOGUE WITH CONGRESSMAN EVANS. IT IS AN INDICATION OF THE IMPORTANCE KRIANGSAK ATTACHED TO U S-THAI RELATIONS THAT HE HAD TURNED OUT THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, EDUCATION, PUBLIC HEALTH, THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND OTHER SENIOR ADVISORS FOR THE MEETING. THE PRIME MINISTER MADE THE PREDICTABLE POINTS IN THE THREE MAJOR SUBJECTS DISCUSSED. HE PRESSED FOR MORE HELICOPTERS FOR NARCOTICS WORK; AND RAISED AGAIN HIS CONCERNS OVER ACCESS TO U S MODERN EQUIPMENT FOR THAILAND. CONGRESSMAN EVANS WAS WELL ACQUAINTED WITH THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED AND WAS ABLE TO FIELD THE PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS KNOWLEDGEABLY AND ACCURATELY. HE EXPRESSED HIS SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR THAILAND'S EFFORTS IN NARCOTICS AND REFUGEE MATTERS AND HIS UNDERSTANDING FOR THAILAND'S UNIQUE SITUATION IN BOTH REGARDS. HE WAS ATTENTIVE TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S COMMENTARY AND, WITHOUT MAKING ANY COMMITMENTS, PROMISED TO MAKE THE PRIME

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MINISTER'S VIEWS AND IDEAS KNOWN AND TO CONSIDER HIS SPECIFIC REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

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